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Introduced by Senator Speier

December 2, 2002

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An act to relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 2, as introduced, Speier. Health care coverage.

Existing law does not require each employer to provide health insurance to its employees.

This bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to develop an employer-based health care coverage system that provides health insurance to every employee in California.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) A majority of Californians receive health care coverage  
4 through their employers as a result of employment, however,  
5 fewer employers in California provide health care coverage than  
6 the nationwide average.

7 (b) In 2001, there were almost 6.3 million uninsured  
8 Californians, or 21.1 percent of Californians under 65 years of age.

9 (c) Slightly over one-half of the uninsured adults in California  
10 were employed in 2001.

11 (d) Those employers who provide for their employees' health  
12 care are also absorbing the costs of the uninsured. This creates an  
13 unfair business climate for those companies that provide health

1 care coverage for their employees. If economic competition is to  
2 be fair and equitable, all employers should absorb these costs  
3 equally. Companies that drop coverage simply shift the cost to  
4 those businesses that continue to maintain coverage partially  
5 causing premiums to rise.

6 (e) Uniform employer health care coverage would  
7 substantially reduce the number of Californians without health  
8 care coverage and would reduce the average cost per employee of  
9 providing health care coverage and would create a level playing  
10 field for all businesses in California.

11 (f) Appropriate and necessary health care leads to a healthier  
12 and more productive work force.

13 (g) All Californians have a right to health care coverage and the  
14 health care system needs universal health care coverage in order  
15 to remain viable. The health care system cannot continue to absorb  
16 the cost of uncompensated health care. Without universal health  
17 care coverage, the health care system will collapse.

18 (h) It is the intent of the Legislature to develop an  
19 employer-based health care coverage system that provides health  
20 insurance to every employee. It is further the intent of the  
21 Legislature that the employer-based health care coverage system  
22 be the base upon which universal health care coverage in  
23 California is built.

